World Summit *for* Social Development

Copenhagen
Denmark
6-12 March 1995

FACT SHEET
OCTOBER 1993

UNITED NATIONS

WHAT:

The World Summit for Social Development

WHERE:

Bella Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark

WHEN:

World Summit 11-12 March 1995
Pre-Summit Consultations 6-10 March

WHY:

The World Summit for Social Development will bring together heads of State and Government from around the world to agree on joint action for alleviating and reducing poverty, expanding productive employment and enhancing social integration. These three interrelated issues affect all societies in industrial and developing countries and require coordinated action by Governments, private and non-governmental institutions and international organizations.

WHO:

The two-day Summit will be at the level of heads of State and Government. It will be preceded by five days of meetings among personal representatives of heads of State or Government or other high-level officials and experts.

The World Summit for Social Development has been convened by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/192 of 16 December 1992. The Summit is being organized by a small secretariat headed by Mr. Jacques Baudot in the United Nations Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) in New York, under the responsibility of Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai.

Participants and observers will include Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts and professional associations.

The Summit will be the fourth in a series of five landmark world conferences organized by the United Nations in the 1990s, all of them closely related: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992); the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993); and the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994) and Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995). The Ninth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders will also take place in early 1995.

PREPARATORY PROCESS

The Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development comprises all United Nations Member States. It held its first organizational session in New York from 12 to 16 April 1993 and elected a Bureau which is chaired by Ambassador Juan O. Somavia (Chile) and composed of nine Vice-Chairmen (Cameroon, Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia, Poland, the Netherlands, Australia, Mexico and Latvia). The representative of Denmark, the host country, will serve as ex-officio member of the Bureau in the capacity of Vice-Chairman.

The 1993 high-level segment of the UN Economic and Social Council (Geneva, 28-29 June) examined the themes to be addressed by the World Summit for Social Development, paying special attention to the central role of the United Nations system in promoting social development. All countries expressed strong political support for the Summit.

Three substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee will be held in 1994 and 1995 (see calendar on back panel). Leading up to the Summit, the three Preparatory Committee meetings will consider reports submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations designed to guide and facilitate the debate and eventual negotiations of the Summit. The Preparatory Committee will also draft the provisional agenda; prepare the draft decisions; and adopt other decisions relevant to the preparation, outcome and follow-up to the Summit. It is expected that the Summit will produce a final document outlining the proposals agreed to by heads of State and Government in Copenhagen.

CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

In the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the peoples of the United Nations expressed their determination *"to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, . . . to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours"*, and *"to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples"*.

Further, in its Article 55, the Charter states that the United Nations should promote *"higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development"*.

The Summit will reaffirm the validity of these goals, consider the obstacles to their achievement and outline the forms of international cooperation and the types of national policies which could foster social progress in all parts of the world.

There are, at the end of this century, favourable conditions for social progress. The end of the global ideological confrontation and the cold war between the super-Powers, the spread of democratic forms of government in various parts of the world and the greater openness of some nations and societies to tolerance and pluralism are positive developments.

Also promising for a better future are the scientific and technological innovations which facilitate the life of peoples and improve working conditions, the communications that now make it possible to exchange information and to learn from one another and, above all, the progress in living conditions that has been achieved in large and small nations around the world.

Poverty, however, remains widespread. Some estimates indicate that as many as 1.3 billion people suffer from severe deprivation. Many children die each day from malnutrition in the underdeveloped regions of the world. Underemployment still characterizes the economy of most nations of the South. Unemployment in industrialized countries has reached levels

unprecedented in recent history. Violence, intolerance and tensions and conflicts within and among communities and nations have become all too frequent. Threats to the environment and to the survival of mankind are still among the challenges confronting the international community. In the rich nations, among intellectuals and observers of the world scene, there is a malaise, a perception of a moral crisis undermining the very fabric of society.

The agenda of the World Summit for Social Development, to be established by Member States of the United Nations through the Preparatory Committee, will include directions and recommendations for international cooperation and national policies in the large variety of domains affecting the living conditions of peoples. The Summit will not be an end in itself, nor an isolated event. It will be part of a process attempting to give priority to social progress and it will build upon the achievements of previous international conferences, including the Rio Conference on Environment and Development.

HOW NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS CAN PARTICIPATE

The General Assembly has invited NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, especially those from developing countries, to participate in the Summit and its preparatory process. They will be given the opportunity to address the Preparatory Committee in plenary meetings and its subsidiary bodies. Other relevant NGOs may ask to speak at such meetings, and may apply for accreditation by the Summit secretariat.

NGO accreditation will be handled by the Summit secretariat, Room S-3060, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA, Fax (212) 963-1010, or the NGO Unit, DPCSD, Room DC2-2340, telephone (212) 963-4842. For further information, please contact the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, Room 6015, 866 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA, Fax (212) 963-8712.

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Printed on recycled paper

Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information
DPI/1427— 93739—October 1993—20M

PRELIMINARY CALENDAR OF RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS MEETINGS

1993 SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, NEW YORK

United Nations General Assembly, forty-eighth session

- Report from organizational session of the Preparatory Committee
- Reports from regional commissions
- Report from high-level segment of Economic and Social Council

27 SEPTEMBER-1 OCTOBER, THE HAGUE

Expert meeting on social integration

4-8 OCTOBER, STOCKHOLM

Expert meeting on expansion of productive employment

1994 31 JANUARY-11 FEBRUARY, NEW YORK

First session of Preparatory Committee

- Report of the Secretary-General
- Reports from expert meetings
- Reports/documents from UN specialized agencies/programmes

22 AUGUST-2 SEPTEMBER, NEW YORK

Second session of Preparatory Committee

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, NEW YORK

General Assembly, forty-ninth session

- Reports from the Preparatory Committee meetings

1995 16-27 JANUARY, NEW YORK

Third session of Preparatory Committee

6-12 MARCH, COPENHAGEN

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